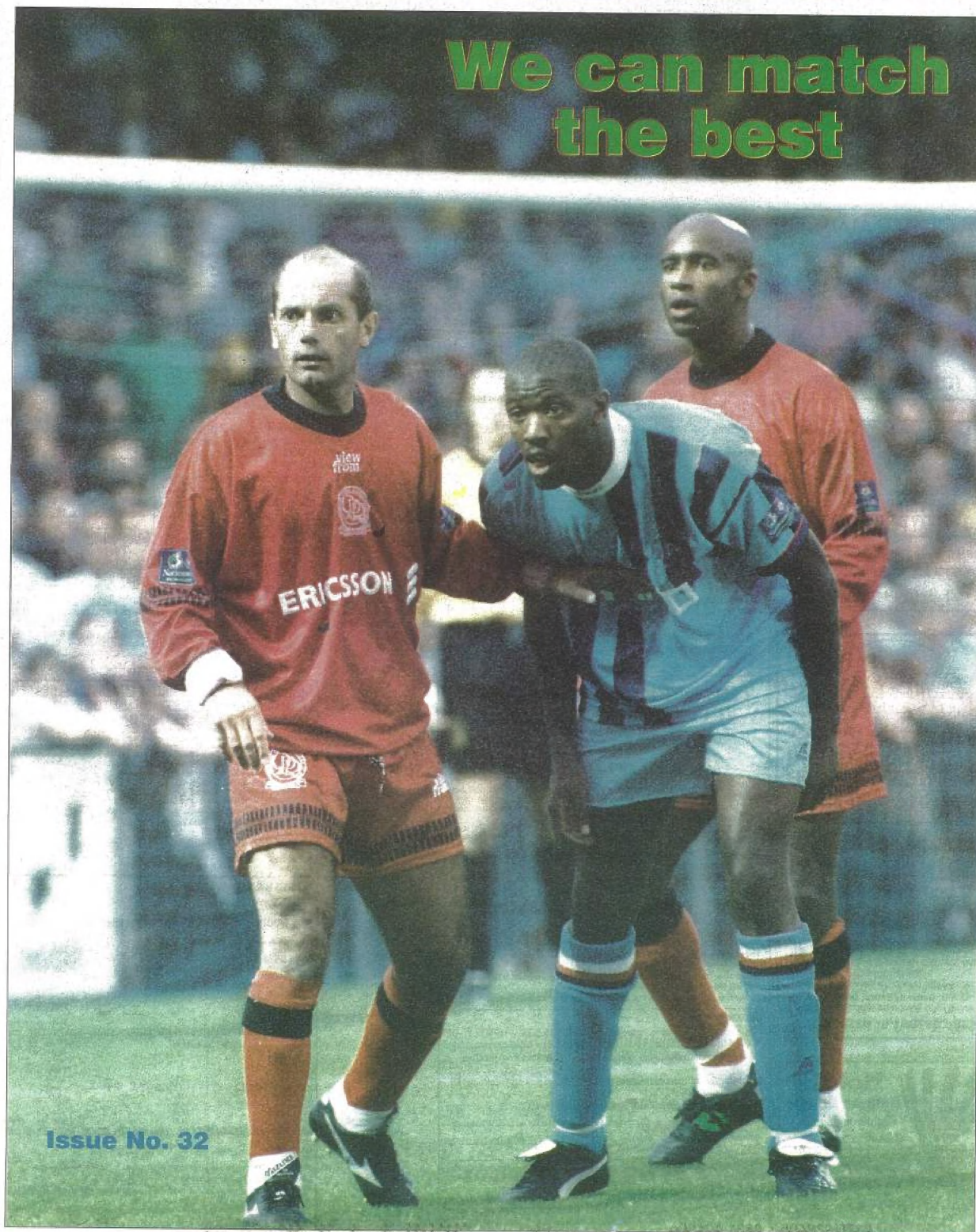




The **BLUES NEWS**

The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club

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Issue No. 32

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2

THE BLUES NEWS

We've been busy



Thanks for your help: Mark Austin shakes hands on ServisPak's sponsorship of the new stand

ALL the commercial staff at Wycombe Wanderers have had to work harder than ever before (other than the Wembley trips) to cope with all the positive changes, brought about by the construction of the new Woodlands 5,000-seater stand, the conversion of the Amer-sham & Wycombe College Stand to all-seater, the installation of a new Synchro ticketing system and the changing finishing dates for the opening of both the Bucks Free Press Family Enclosure and the ServisPak Stand.

From August 1, 1996, the new Woodlands Stand became known as the ServisPak Stand. The official launch of the ServisPak Stand will take place in the near future, along with the official launch of the ServisPak Centres of Excellence, run by youth team manager Neil Smilie and youth development officer Jim Melvin.

These should be officially launched by Alec Tuckerman, chairman of ServisPak Ltd, and hopefully also with a guest celebrity, before the Division Two match against Bury next Tuesday night.



**COMMERCIAL
BREAK
By Mark
Austin**

ServisPak Ltd has been a terrific supporter of the club since our move from Loakes Park, regularly supporting the annual Golf Day, Sportsman's Dinners, sponsoring matches and advertising around the stadium. I am personally delighted that they have agreed to sponsor the ServisPak stand and the Centres of Excellence for three years, recognising the importance of helping get Wycombe Wanderers more firmly established in the local community.

The new ticketing system has caused many headaches, and hopefully by now you will be able to buy tickets for any match this season from the club or Wanderers in Town. In fact you can select all the

matches you want to attend at one visit and take the tickets away with you, to save queuing more than once. Alternatively you can do it all by phone using the credit card hotline, and with a charge of £1 per transaction, it makes sense to order most of the matches you want to come to during one phone call. Wycombe Wanderers Visa card holders do not have to pay the £1 fee.

For information on this visa card, with no annual fee, use free-phone (0800) 776262, quoting reference GT179.

I know supporters who already have other visa cards may be sceptical about having another visa card, but it does not cost them a penny, it supports the club, there is no annual fee, it operates the same as any other Visa card and there is no booking fee on the credit card hotline. Application forms are available from the club, Wanderers in Town or by ringing the above Freephone number. More than 700 WWFC supporters already benefit from having a Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card.

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correspondence should be
sent to the Editor, The Blues
News, Wycombe Wanderers
Football Club, Hillbottom
Road, Sands, High
Wycombe. Telephone
(01494) 472100. Fax (01494)
527633.

Sellers sought

WYCOMBE Wanderers
need ticket sellers for their
Matchday 50/50 Draw for
the 1996/97 season.

There will be ten per cent
commission for every ticket
sold and a chance to watch
Wanderers' home matches
free. If you would like to be
a matchday seller, you must
be over 16. Contact Mike
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**THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF
WYCOMBE WANDERERS F.C.
FROM 1887 TO 1996**

Available from 26th October 1996

Written by recognised Club "experts" Dave Finch & Steve Peart, this book
records in detail the History of the Club, starting from the earliest days in
1887 up to and including the 1995/1996 season. The first full written history
and statistical book on Wycombe Wanderers.

INCLUDES:

* A players Who's Who section (from 1963)

* The written history of the club

* Full match details from 1887 to 1996

* Club personalities, Loakes Park, Matchday Programmes etc.

AND... Packed with many illustrations - action photos, team groups etc.

This quality hardback is crammed with the detailed history of the Club within
256 large pages, and is a "must" for all Wycombe fans; young and old, past
and present alike, and you can be part of the book too!

For every paid order received by 28th September 1996, your name (and
town/area) will be printed on the special "Subscribers Page" at no extra cost.
The book will be published by Yore Publications (specialists in historical
football books) and costs £16.95.

(Exact date for collection from the Club to be announced later) or add £3.70
for your posted copy on publication day.

Please tear off and retain this upper portion for your information.

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For inclusion on the Subscribers page, payment must be received by 28th
September 1996.

**A CHAMPION OFFER - COME AND WATCH THE BLUES FOR A SEASON
CHILD SEASON TICKETS START FROM AS LITTLE AS £40**

ADULT SEASON TICKETS FROM JUST £140

For the forthcoming 1996/97 Season Wycombe Wanderers Football Club are offering Child Season Tickets at
crash prices. Any under 16 year old can purchase a Season Ticket in the AXA Equity & Law Stand for just
£40 or a seat in the new Bucks Free Press Family Enclosure for a mere £45. That works out at less than £2.50
per week for the whole season! (Note: Senior Citizens, Disabled and Students can all
purchase seat Season Tickets for as little as £100 with adults having to only pay an additional £50).

Extra benefits for Season Ticket holders include:

* Free entry to all Capital League Reserve Team fixtures at Adams Park

* 50% discount at Wanderers in Town and Corner Flag Clubshop

* Priority booking for all home Cup and away League Cup matches

A full list of 1996/97 Season Ticket and matchday prices is printed below:

MATCHDAY ENTRANCE PRICES		SEASON TICKETS
MAIN STAND - SEATS BLOCKS A-G (HOME ONLY)		
Adults	£12	£240
OAP, Students & Children	£12	£116
VIPs	£21.50	n/a
BLOCKS H & V (AWAY ONLY)		
Adults	£12	n/a
OAP, Students & Children	£12	n/a
NEW WOODLANDS STAND (UPPER TIER) - SEATS N, P & Q		
Adults	£12	£240
OAP, Students & Children	£12	£116
BLOCKS M & R		
Adults	£10	£200
OAP, Students & Children	£10	£100
BLOCKS K, L, S & T		
Adults	£K	£160
OAP, Students & Children	£8	£144
NEW WOODLANDS FAMILY STAND (LOWER TIER) - SEATS - THE FAMILY STAND IS NO SMOKING		
Adults	£8	£160
OAP, Students & Children	£5	£100
Children	£5	£45
AXA EQUITY & LAW STAND - TERRACE		
Adults	£7	£140
OAP	£4.50	£90
Students	£4.50	£90
Children	£4.50	£40
AMERSHAM & WYCOMBE COLLEGE STAND - SEATS (AWAY FANS ONLY)		
Adults	£10	n/a
OAP, Students & Children	£5	n/a

All children's ticket prices include FREE MEMBERSHIP of the Junior Blues Supporters Club.

Season Tickets can be purchased from either:

* The Commercial Offices at Adams Park, Monday to Friday 9.15am to 5.15pm and Saturday matchdays 10.00am to 2.45pm.

* Wanderers in Town which is situated in the Odeon Shopping Centre, Monday to Saturday 9.00am to 5.30pm.

* The Credit Card Hotline (01494) 441111 Monday to Friday 9.15am to 5.15pm.

Matchday tickets can also be purchased through this season from these outlets.

THE BLUES NEWS

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Stand will deliver

AS it would appear that completion of the upper tier of the new Woodlands Stand could be doubtful in time for the Gillingham and Bury matches on August 24 and 27, it has been decided to play safe and relocate all the upper tier season ticket holders to the Main Stand.

Holders of upper tier season tickets should enter the ground at entrance four, present voucher number one from their season ticket book for the Gillingham match and voucher number two for the Bury match and they will be issued with a numbered seat ticket for the main stand. Lower tier season ticket holders are unaffected.

The directors and staff of the club and the building contractors apologise for the inconvenience caused to season ticket holders and will continue to make every effort to pressure the contractors to complete on time.

It does appear, however, that Linpave Construction Ltd will overrun and incur penalty charges.

The lower tier - containing the Bucks Free Press family enclosure - will be available to those holding season tickets for this area and other families on the day. Season ticket holders in the Main Stand are requested to use entrance one for both the first two matches. No Main Stand seats will be available for the general public for Gillingham and Bury.

The AXA Equity & Law Stand will be available as usual. The upper tier will be open for the Reading Coca-Cola Cup match on Tuesday, September 3 and tickets are now on sale from the commercial office, Wanderers In Town and the credit card hotline on (01494) 441118.

We're raring to go



Fighting fit: John Williams (left) and Miquel Desouza work out with weights to get in shape for the new season. Blues open their home campaign against Gillingham on Saturday

By Manager
Alan Smith



IF you have been to Adams Park recently you can't have failed to notice the enormous changes that have been made during the close season, and we hope that you will enjoy the new stand and its facilities.

In general I was pleased with our pre-season, obviously with the exception of the injury to Keith Ryan. On this point, I confirm Keith will be having an operation next week and will hopefully be back as soon as possible in Wycombe colours.

We had tremendous support for our away game at Shrewsbury and I would like to thank everyone who attended, especially bearing in mind that the game was on a Sunday and in extremely hot weather.

Despite our disappointing start, our supporters got behind the team and it made an enormous difference and was very much appreciated.

There is no doubt, as we saw throughout the Wembley matches during Euro 96, that the crowd play an important part in motivating the team.

With several new players in the squad we need to settle things quickly but in general we now have a young team who are enthusiastic and hardworking and whom I am sure are proud to wear Wycombe colours.

I hope to see you at Adams Park soon.

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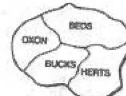
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6

THE BLUES NEWS

Moaners are not real fans

I LIKE to think of a supporter as a person, male or female, young or old, who will support their club through thick and thin always.

Even if this typical supporter moves away from the area, he or she will still attend some matches each year and when not able to be there in person, their spirit will be dispatched instead.

It was heartening to talk to some longstanding QPR supporters after our friendly. Over the years they have experienced ups and downs and on balance the downs have the upper hand.

One father and son were quite philosophical about the Rangers situation. They now live in Southampton and would not be seen dead at their local stadium unless the Superhoops are playing there but the intention is to be at Loftus Road for all the home matches and to travel to most of the away matches.

If they happen to be in Division One then so be it. What a contrast to the negative comments from a few of our less understanding supporters when we failed to make the play-offs last season - success is not a divine right, even for the Wanderers.

Tony Ingham came to Adams Park for the QPR match. He is a delightful person, always cheerful and optimistic. This is the same man who played left back for the whole of his career wearing a blue and white hooped shirt. I believe that he is still the holder of the highest number of Football League appearances, a figure in excess of 600.

While talking about our new home shirt, he said that a few years ago when QPR had Guinness as shirt sponsors, the marketing lads came up with the bright idea of changing the colours of the hoops to green and brown, Guinness house colours.

Jim Gregory, the

NOT ALL SUPPORTERS QUALIFY FOR THE TITLE Letter to a Supporter

larger-than-life chairman who had rebuilt the club and had by then steered it into the top division, was unexpectedly diplomatic and sent the said young man to ask the question of Tony Ingham who was secretary at the time. Tony's response was unprintable but roughly equated to 'over my dead body'.

This takes my thoughts onto a matter which needs redressing. Open Letters to the Bucks Free Press.

It has long been the sensible policy of the club to ignore such letters. Starting a ping-pong of letters via our worthy local rag achieves little.

Letters addressed to the club are always answered, I hope.

Now the particular letters to which I refer complained about a number of issues. The writer did not like the new strip and advised readers not to buy one and a second letter suggested that the cost of a seat in the Amersham & Wycombe College away supporters end was too costly at £10.

The wonderful thing about our country is that democracy prevails, everywhere (except sometimes at home) at national level, local level, in your place of work and most certainly at the Wanderers.

The matter of the design of the players' shirts is an important one.

Even though going to our supporters for a vote on their choice meant missing a deadline, the supporters were given the opportunity and they chose the current new strip.

Having established that fact, I would defend the right of anyone to express their views about any issue regarding the Wanderers. I might not always agree with some

of the comments and I would always prefer someone to state their objection and then their solution. That is then positive.

It is too easy to simply not like something and then moan about it to all and sundry.

I really would appreciate some constructive suggestions from true supporters who care about their club.

You may now wonder what I am complaining about. Someone writes a letter to the club and does not agree with the response. His next move is to write to the Free Press setting out his gripe.

Why do I not like this? Because the writer does not have the strength of character to put his name to the letter.

Letters printed with 'name and address supplied' at the bottom is the same tactic that terrorists use. They know that they cannot carry their views with the democratic majority so they force their agenda onto a wider audience and always anonymously.

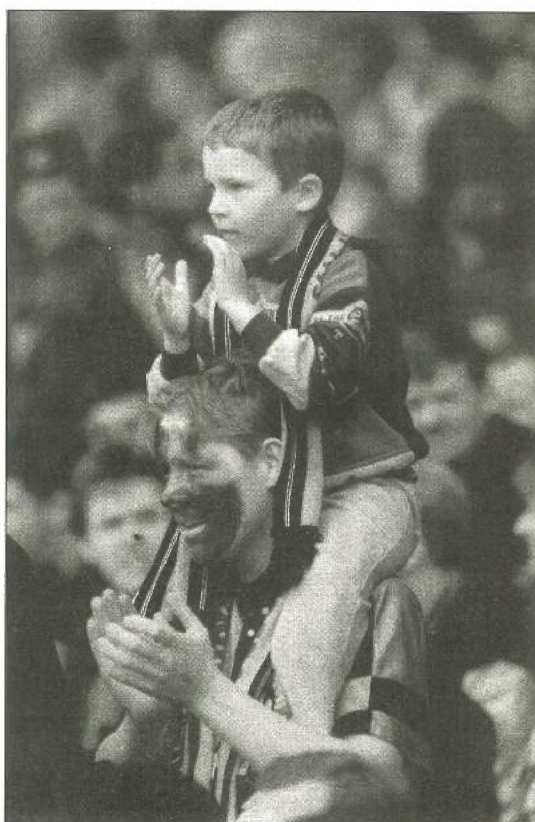
I would ask you, my reader, to ignore such trivial complaints from people who can never qualify for the title as supporter.

I could reveal the name of the writer but they do not deserve the publicity. Apparently he is a member of a 'supporters club' and a shareholder. He must be ashamed of his words otherwise his name would appear with them and then I would be able to answer the comments with facts. You will make your own judgement on the matter. After that forget about it and waste no further time.

You are a supporter. Come to watch the matches. Let me know if you have any bright ideas to help us get promotion to Division One this year.

I would love to visit Loftus Road to play a league match, wouldn't you?

Graham Peart
Financial director



True Blues: But financial director Graham Peart is questioning the loyalty of some fans who have written letters of complaint



Wycombe Wanderers Football Club are delighted to announce that the new 1,788 Bucks Free Press family enclosure will be open for the Blues' first home match against Gillingham this Saturday and for the Bury game on August 27.

It has been decided to relocate all the Upper Tier season ticket holders to the Main Stand.

Holders of the Upper Tier season tickets should enter the ground at entrance four, present voucher number one from their season ticket book for the Gillingham match and voucher number two for the Bury match and they will be issued with a numbered seat ticket for the Main Stand.

Lower Tier season ticket holders are unaffected. The directors and staff of the club apologise for any inconvenience caused due to the main contractors Linpave Construction Ltd slightly overrunning.

The Bucks Free Press family enclosure will be available to those holding season tickets for this area and for any other families, OAPs, students or children on the day.

The AXA Equity & Law stand will be available to the general public as usual. The Upper Tier of the new stand will be open for the Reading Coca-Cola Cup match on Tuesday, September 3, and tickets are now on sale from the commercial office, Wanderers In Town, and the credit card hotline on (01494) 441118.

Don't miss the bus

Route A (operated by Classic Coaches)

from: The Common, Holmer Green, Saturday 1.30pm, Weekday 6.15pm, fare £2; Park Parade, Saturday 1.35pm, Weekday 6.20pm, fare £2; Hazlemere Crossroads, Saturday 1.40pm, Weekday 6.25pm, fare £2; Tyeack Road/Totterside Lane, Saturday 1.47pm, Weekday 6.32pm, fare £1.50; Hollis Road, Saturday 1.49pm, Weekday 6.34pm, fare £1.50; Hicks Farm Rise, Saturday 1.51pm, Weekday 6.36pm, fare £1.50; Mickelfield Road, Saturday 1.53pm, Weekday 6.38pm, fare £1.50; Wycombe Marsh, Saturday 1.58pm, Weekday 6.43pm, fare £1.50; Homebase, Hatters Lane, Saturday 2pm, Weekday 6.48pm, fare £1.50; WWFC arrive, Saturday 2.15pm, Weekday 7pm.

Route B (operated by Classic Coaches)

from: Blind Lane, Green Dragon, Saturday 1.25pm, Weekday 6.10pm, fare £2; Bourne End, The Parade, Saturday 1.30pm, Weekday 6.15pm, fare £2; Cores End Road, Saturday 1.34pm, Weekday 6.19pm, fare £2; The Green, Saturday 1.39pm, Weekday 6.24pm, fare £2; Boundary Road, Saturday 1.42pm, Weekday 6.27pm, fare £2; Station Road, Saturday 1.44pm, Weekday 6.29pm, fare £2; Rayners Avenue, Saturday 1.49pm, Weekday 6.34, fare £2; Hatters Lane, Saturday 1.54pm, Weekday 6.39pm, fare £2; Hillary Road, Saturday 1.56pm, Weekday 6.41pm, fare £1.50; Totterside Road/Healey Avenue, Saturday 1.58pm, Weekday 6.43pm, fare £1.50; Boverdown/London Road, Saturday 2pm, Weekday 6.45pm, fare £1.50; WWFC arrive, Saturday 2.15pm, Weekday 7pm.

Route C (operated by Classic Coaches)

from: Mill Lane, Monks Risborough, Saturday 1.40pm, Weekday 6.15pm, fare £2; Place Farm Way, Saturday 1.42pm, Weekday 6.17pm, fare £2; Pinches Risborough Market Place, Saturday 1.45pm, Weekday 6.20pm, fare £2; Lacey Green, The Whip, Saturday 1.51pm, Weekday 6.26pm, fare £2; Walters Ash, Prestwood, Saturday 1.55pm, Weekday 6.30pm, fare £2; Naghill Post Office, Saturday 1.59pm, Weekday 6.34pm, fare £2; Coombe Lane Bottom,

Saturday 2.03pm, Weekday 6.38pm, fare £2; Hughenden Avenue, Saturday 2.06pm, Weekday 6.41pm, fare £1.50; The Pastures, Saturday 2.09pm, Weekday 6.44pm, fare £1.50; WWFC arrive, Saturday 2.25pm, Weekday 7pm.

Route D (operated by Classic Coaches)

from: Penn Post Office, Saturday 1.30pm, Weekday 6.20pm, fare £2; Church Road, Saturday 1.32pm, Weekday 6.22pm, fare £2; New Road, Saturday 1.34pm, Weekday 6.24pm, fare £2; Curzon Avenue, Saturday 1.36pm, Weekday 6.26pm, fare £2; Rose Avenue, Saturday 1.40pm, Weekday 6.30pm, fare £2; Hazlemere Crossroads, Saturday 1.45pm, Weekday 6.35pm, fare £2; Terriers, Saturday 1.50pm, Weekday 6.40pm, fare £1.50; Hamilton Road, Saturday 1.58pm, Weekday 6.48pm, fare £1.50; Hughenden Road, Saturday 2.02pm, Weekday 6.52pm, fare £1.50; The Pastures, Saturday 2.05pm, Weekday 6.55pm, fare £1.50; WWFC arrive, Saturday 2.20pm, Weekday 7.10pm.

Route E (operated by Classic Coaches)

from: Mickelfield Road/Woodside Road, Saturday 1.40pm, Weekday 6.25pm, fare £1.50; Hicks Farm Rise, Saturday 1.45pm, Weekday 6.30pm, fare £1.50; Totterside Drive, Saturday 1.50pm, Weekday 6.35pm, fare £1.50; Arnsion Avenue/Wallon Drive, Saturday 1.53pm, Weekday 6.38pm, fare £1.50; Totterside Road/Morning Star, Saturday 1.55pm, Weekday 6.40pm, fare £1.50; Wycombe train station, Saturday 2pm, Weekday 6.45pm, fare £1.50; WWFC arrive, Saturday 2.15pm, Weekday 7pm.

Return service departs from Adams Park 15 minutes after the final whistle. Single flat fare from the ground to any point en route is £1.50 with half price fares for Under-16s, senior citizens and concessionary fare permit holders.

Football Specials

High Wycombe train station: Evenings 6.35pm (arr 6.50pm), 7.05pm (arr 7.20pm), Saturdays 1.55pm (arr 2.10pm), 2.25pm (arr 2.40pm).

High Wycombe bus station: Evenings 6.40pm (arr 6.50pm), 7.10pm (arr 7.20pm), Saturdays 2pm (arr 2.10pm), 2.30pm (arr 2.40pm).

Buses return to the station ten minutes after the final whistle.

Make the most of your stay

HOSPITALITY PROVES POPULAR
By Tim Arnold

WYCOMBE Wanderers Football Club have developed their range of matchday activities in order to attract more spectators to more games.

One of the biggest success stories in the sales and marketing department of Wycombe Wanderers is the development and popularity of the guest hospitality package.

This is run throughout the season at every home first team fixture which includes both evening and Saturday matches.

The package is aimed at giving spectators the chance to view a game while gaining a behind-the-scenes insight as to how the football club operate on a matchday.

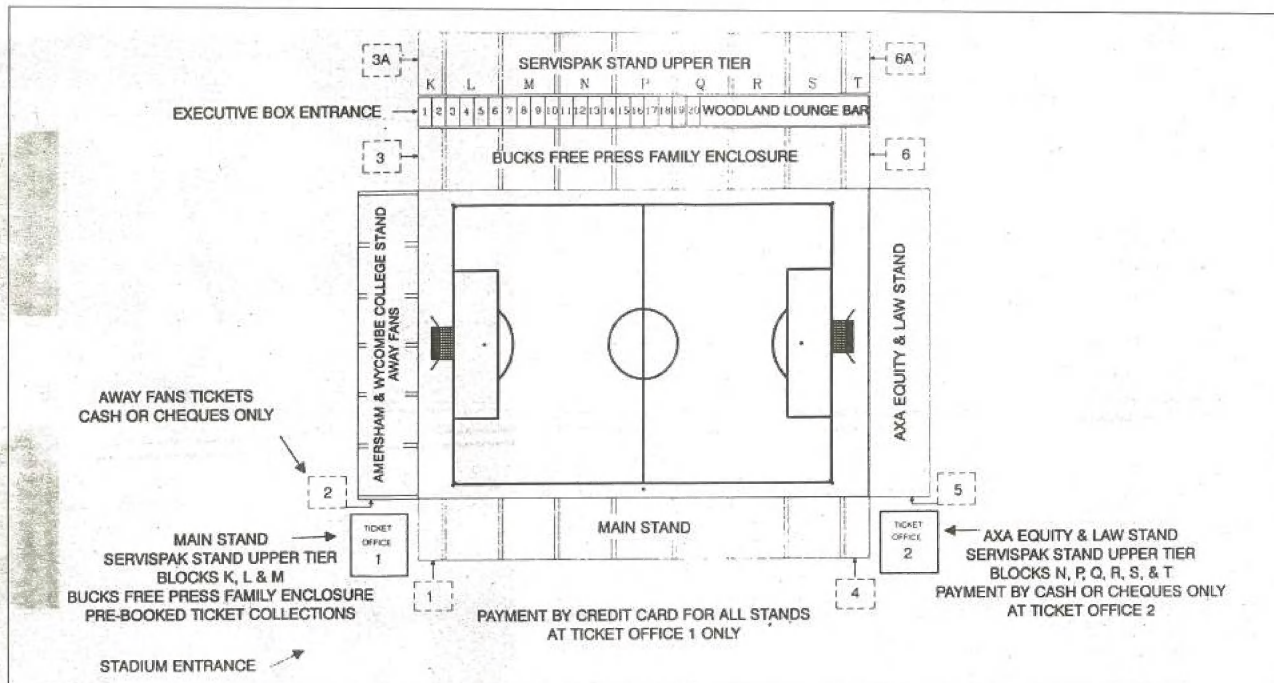
The standard package price is £35 plus VAT, but for the Luton Town match on September 7, the price is £40 plus VAT and for the Watford match on February 22, 1997, the price is £50 plus VAT. Any FA Cup third-round match against Manchester United would be at least £100 plus VAT.

For availability contact Tim Arnold on (01494) 472100. The

THE BLUES NEWS

7

Get in sync with Synchro



How to get what, where and when: This plan shows where you need to go to get your tickets for a particular part of Adams Park on match days

WITH the building of the new £2 million, 5,000-seater Woodlands Stand, the club have decided to buy a new computerised ticketing system which will make it easier for supporters to buy tickets in advance.

The new system is called Synchro and is used by a number of the top clubs such as Manchester United and was successfully employed

during the Euro 96 Championship.

Prior to a home fixture, tickets will be on sale from the commercial office at Adams Park, Wanderers in Town in the Octagon Shopping Centre or on the credit card hotline (01494) 441118.

Tickets that are purchased on the day of the match will be bought

from one of the two new ticket offices.

The stadium map above shows the two ticket offices situated at either end of the Main Stand. Below is a script explaining which area of the ground is supplied by which ticket office.

On Saturday matchdays the ticket

offices will be open from noon until kick-off and then for half an hour after the game. The new system has the capability of printing and selling tickets for different fixtures in the same transaction which saves the spectator the worry of having to buy a ticket on the day for the following fixture.

On evening matches the

commercial office will be open and selling tickets up until 6pm when all the ticket offices will open.

Please allow plenty of time in order to purchase your ticket prior to the match.

Tickets also need to be purchased from the ticket office for all spectators wishing to go into the AXA Equity & Law Stand.

201

WYCOMBE WANDERERS

FOOTBALL CLUB

ATTENTION OF ALL SEASON TICKET HOLDERS IN THE UPPER TIER OF THE NEW STAND

As it would appear that completion of the **UPPER TIER** of the new Stand could be doubtful in time for the Gillingham and Bury Matches on the 24th and 27th of August, it has been decided to play-safe and relocate the Season Ticket holders in the Main Stand.

Holders of Upper Tier Season Tickets should enter the ground at Entrance 4, present Voucher No. 1 from their Season Ticket book for the Gillingham match and Voucher No. 2 for the Bury match and they will be issued with a numbered seat ticket for the Main Stand.

The Directors and Staff of the Club and the Building Contractors apologise for the inconvenience caused to the Season Ticket holders and will continue to make every effort to complete on time.

The **LOWER TIER**, Bucks Free Press Family Stand, **WILL** be available to families only.

Season Ticket holders in the Main Stand are requested to use Entrance 1 for both the first two matches. No other seats will be available for the general public.

In the event of last minute completion and issue of safety certificate Season Ticket holders will be re-directed on the day to the new Stand, to their allocated seat.

Wish Wycombe Wanderers every success for the coming season.

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FOOTBALL CLUB

ATTENTION OF ALL SEASON TICKET HOLDERS IN THE UPPER TIER OF THE NEW STAND

As it would appear that completion of the **UPPER TIER** of the new Stand could be doubtful in time for the Gillingham and Bury Matches on the 24th and 27th of August, it has been decided to play-safe and relocate the Season Ticket holders in the Main Stand.

Holders of Upper Tier Season Tickets should enter the ground at Entrance 4, present Voucher No. 1 from their Season Ticket book for the Gillingham match and Voucher No. 2 for the Bury match and they will be issued with a numbered seat ticket for the Main Stand.

The Directors and Staff of the Club and the Building Contractors apologise for the inconvenience caused to the Season Ticket holders and will continue to make every effort to complete on time.

The **LOWER TIER**, Bucks Free Press Family Stand, **WILL** be available to families only.

Season Ticket holders in the Main Stand are requested to use Entrance 1 for both the first two matches. No other seats will be available for the general public.

In the event of last minute completion and issue of safety certificate Season Ticket holders will be re-directed on the day to the new Stand, to their allocated seat.

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THE BLUES NEWS

We have the edge now

THE lads had a good pre-season. As mentioned previously, the results of the games are not as important as what we learn from them.

Unfortunately each team we played against used the sweeper system which is not very common in the Second Division.

Of course we could not dictate how they should play but it took us some time to get used to the approach of Shrewsbury. The Wycombe supporters who made the trip would have seen us getting to grips with them in the second half when it was evident that our fitness level was greater than our opponents' who had given everything in the first period. We could and should have finished them off.

In the week before the start of the season, the boss decided to take the whole squad out for a few drinks, a meal and a general get-together which was very good for team spirit. They had a karaoke available and surprisingly there are a few budding Bob Marleys and Noel Gallaghers at Wycombe.

We recently went to the Riverside Fitness Studio in south London where we worked with the trainers who assisted us in the pre-season build-up. Each player was again assessed and tips given for us to go away and work on.

Some lads are now

CAPTAIN'S LOG
By Terry Evans



concentrating in the gym on improving strength and power areas which were identified as needing development.

The youth team got off to a good start with a 6-2 win against Barnet. We now have a strong squad of lads and if they can continue to improve I am sure that they will win something this year. A big part of our training is pattern of play, which is basically 11-a-side games.

Because of the small squad we have, many of the apprentices play against us. Each of the main squad will play their normal game which clearly makes the young lads stronger playing against men rather than lads of around the same age and strength.

West Ham, for example have a full reserve side and therefore the youths never get a sniff of making the progression from youth through to reserve and then on to first team football.

Everybody connected with the club is gutted with the news that Keith Ryan is going to be out for a while with a serious knee injury. Without the knee going under the knife,

the diagnosis looks like a cruciate ligament injury which is desperate news for him and his family.

At least I know he will be in safe hands with David Dandy the surgeon. If you need any proof, you only need to hear a list of the players he has operated on previously, including not only myself but Alan Shearer.

After the operation Keith will undergo rehabilitation with Dave Jones who is already working with him to ensure a speedy and full recovery. Keith worked really hard last season to get himself fit. He had a few set-backs but enjoyed getting back into the side.

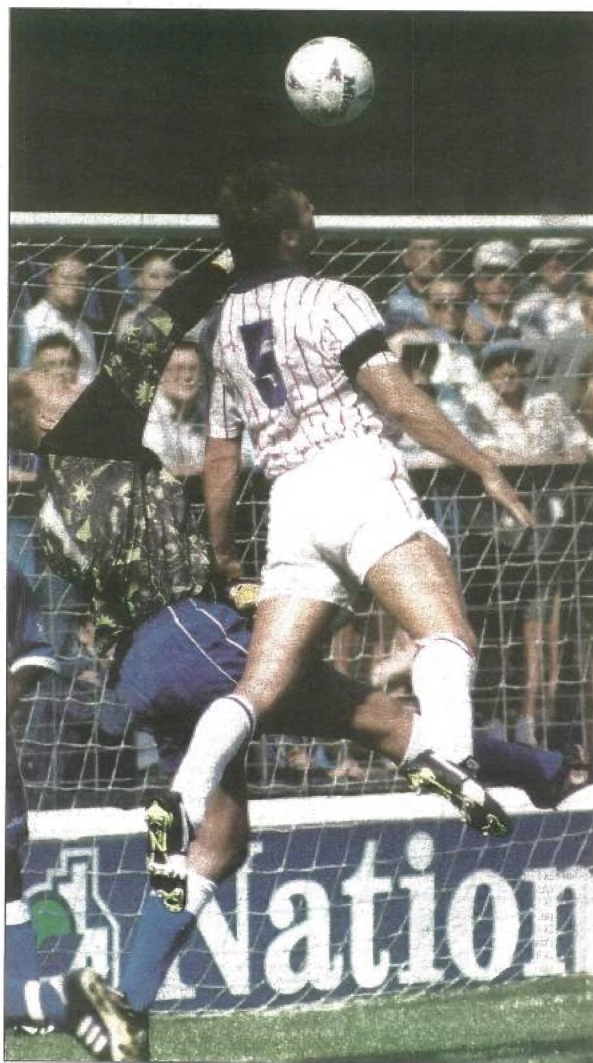
After all he had gone through I expected him to be very low in the changing room, especially now knowing what he would have to go through to get back to full fitness, but instead he put a brave face on the situation, trying to keep the lads lifted.

Dave is the best physio I have worked with which is great news for Keith. He has a long way to go with a lot of hard work but it is important to have confidence in the person working with you.

I must admit being quite superstitious. I don't normally insist on anybody doing the same as me but on this occasion Keith was persuaded to change his squad number which for sometime has been 13.



Bad blow: Keith Ryan is stretchered off during the pre-season friendly against QPR



Knockout: Terry Evans battles for aerial supremacy at Shrewsbury

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